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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 TEL AVIV 18695

E.O. 12065: N/A

TAGS: CASC, CPAS, IS

SUBJECT: BLACK HEBREW ARTICLES IN JERUSALEM POST

REF: TEL AVIV 16500

THERE FOLLOWS THE TEXT OF THE SECOND OF THE JOAN BORSTEN
ARTICLES ON THE BLACK HEBREWS WHICH APPEARED IN THE
JERUSALEM POST ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1980:

QUOTE

BLACK HEBREW 'MESSIAH' MODERATES HIS STANCE.
"FROM 47TH STREET AND FROM DIMONA THERE IS A DIFFERENT
VIEW OF ISRAEL. WE'VE BEEN HERE FOR ELEVEN YEARS AND
SOMETHING HAS RUBBED OFF. OUR POSITION HAS BEEN MODERATED.
I SEE THE COMMUNITY AS A FLOWER THAT WILL BLOSSOM AND BE
BEAUTIFUL UNTO THE LANDSCAPE OF ISRAEL. I FEEL WE HAVE A
LOT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE STATE." BEN-AMI CARTER,
SEPTEMBER 1980.

DIMONA - BEN-AMI CARTER, SELF-PROCLAIMED MESSIAH OF THE
BLACK HEBREW CULT, HAS CHANGED HIS TUNE - AT LEAST
PUBLICLY. MILITANTLY ANTI-WHITE, ANTI-SEMITIC, AND ANTI-
ISRAEL FOR ALMOST A DECADE, HE SAYS TODAY HE IS WILLING
TO LET HIS MALE FOLLOWERS JOIN THE ISRAELI DEFENCE FORCES
AND VOTE IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS - IF THE GOVERNMENT AGREES
TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY A COMMISSION HEADED BY
DAVID GLASS MK.

THAT REPORT, COMMISSIONED IN AUGUST 1978 AND SUBMITTED
TO THE INTERIOR MINISTER IN JUNE 1980, SUGGESTS THAT ISRAEL
SETTLE THE BLACK HEBREWS ON A PIECE OF NEGEV LAND AND
EVENTUALLY GIVE THEM PERMANENT RESIDENCE VISAS. IN RETURN,
CARTER WILL STOP THE FLOW OF NEW RECRUITS FROM AMERICA
WHICH HAVE OVER THE YEARS SWELLED THE CULT'S RANKS FROM A
FEW HUNDRED TO AN ESTIMATED 2,000.

GONE IS THE FANATICAL EVANGELIST WHO LAID CLAIM TO THE
LAND OF ISRAEL "TO THE FULLEST EXTENT OF ITS BIBLICAL
BOUNDARIES," AND ACCUSED "THOSE WHO CALL THEMSELVES JEWS"
OF STEALING THE IDENTITY, CULTURE, HISTORY AND LANGUAGE
OF THE HEBREW ISRAELITES. NO MORE IS THE FORMER CHICAGO
TRUCK-DRIVER DECLARING THAT A MILLION MORE BLACK HEBREWS
ARE READY TO "COME HOME" TO ISRAEL, OR PREDICTING THAT
AFTER A PERIOD OF CATASTROPHE, PESTILENCE, AND FAMINE THE
BLACK HEBREWS WILL BE RESTORED TO GOD'S FAVOR AND WORLD
LEADERSHIP.

GONE ALSO ARE CHARGES OF ISRAELI RACISM, AND THE ANTI-
SEMITIC CAMPAIGN HIS FOLLOWERS RAN IN THE U.S., WHICH
INCLUDED CALLS FOR AN ECONOMIC BOYCOTT OF AMERICAN-JEWISH
BUSINESSES AND A CONGRESSIONAL BAN ON AID TO ISRAEL.

TODAY CARTER IS THE REASONABLE, CONCILIATORY BLACK AMERICAN
PREACHER, LEADER OF A SMALL BAND OF REFUGEES FROM THE
GHETTOS OF AMERICA WHO WANT NOTHING MORE THAN TO TEND
THEIR VEGETABLE PATCHES, WORK HARD, AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE
STATE OF ISRAEL.

IS HE SINCERE? SOME MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL AND INTER-
NATIONAL PRESS, AS WELL AS SOME AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANIZA-
TIONS BELIEVE THAT THE ONCE BELLIGERENT BLACK
NATIONALIST HAS UNDERGONE A GENUINE CHANGE OF ATTITUDE.
CARTER HIMSELF WRITES OFF HIS PAST CONDEMNATION OF THE
STATE OF ISRAEL AS SIMPLY AN EFFORT TO "PRECIPITATE SOME
INTEREST IN THE COMMUNITY, AS WE WERE SEEKING RELIEF FROM
THE HARDSHIPS." ACTUALLY, HE ADDS AS A JUSTIFICATION,
"WE WERE NOT SO MUCH CONDEMNING THE STATE AS WHAT WAS
HAPPENING TO US HERE."

MANY OF THE ISRAELIS AND AMERICANS FAMILIAR WITH THE CULT,
HOWEVER, DESCRIBE CARTER AS A CLEVER PRAGMATIST, STILL
PRIVATELY CONVINCED THAT HIS MISSION IS TO "ESTABLISH
THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN JERUSALEM, NORTH EAST AFRICA AND
BECOME A GUIDING LIGHT FOR THE AFRICAN CONTINENT." THEY
BELIEVE HE IS STILL INDOCTRINATING HIS FOLLOWERS WITH A
HATRED FOR WHITES AND JEWS.

WHAT MOTIVATES CARTER TODAY, THEY SAY, IS THAT TIME IS
RUNNING OUT. TO COMBAT CHALLENGES TO HIS AUTHORITY, EGOIST
MORRN, AND STEM COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE OVERCROWDING AND
FINANCIAL HARDSHIP, HE NEEDS TO WREST MAJOR CONCESSIONS
FROM THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT - EVEN IF THE PRICE IS PUBLIC
MODERATION OF HIS EXTREMIST VIEWS.

THE PAST THREE YEARS HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN DIFFICULT FOR
CARTER. WHEN ARMAGEDDON DID NOT OCCUR AS HE PREDICTED IN
SEPTEMBER 1977, SOME LEADERS OF THE GROUP DEFECTED - AMONG
THEM TOMMY AND HAZEL WHITFIELD WHO HAVE RECORDED THEIR
EXPERIENCES AS BLACK HEBREWS IN A SOON-TO-BE-PUBLISHED

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BOOK AND IN AN NEC-TV DOCUMENTARY. NON-LEADERS HAVE ALSO LEFT - MANY MORE, OBSERVERS FEEL, THAN CARTER IS WILLING TO ADMIT. STORIES OF A LIFE-STYLE SIMILAR TO THE PEOPLE'S TEMPLE CULT IN JONESTOWN, GUYANA, WHICH BEGAN TO FILTER BACK TO THE PRESS IN LATE 1976, HAVE SINCE BECOME MORE WIDESPREAD.

IN ADDITION, RESIDENTS OF DIMONA AND ARAD, FURIOUS BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT SOLVED THE "BLACK HEBREW PROBLEM" - MEMBERS OF THE CULT ARE STILL LIVING AS TO A ROOM IN VARIOUS APARTMENTS, CAUSING SEVERE TO OVERFLOW AND PROPERTY VALUES TO DECLINE - HAVE TAKEN THE LAW INTO THEIR OWN HANDS. IT IS NOW VERY DIFFICULT FOR CARTER TO RENT FLATS TO HOUSE HIS FOLLOWERS.

NEW REPORTS HAVE SURFACED ABOUT MALNUTRITION, POOR EDUCATION AND ILLEGAL USE OF AMERICAN PASSPORTS. SOME MEMBERS OF CARTER'S ORGANIZATION IN CHICAGO HAVE BEEN JAILED FOR FRAUD AND THEFT. THE POLICE HAVE APPARENTLY COMPILED A NEW SECRET REPORT RECOMMENDING DEPORTATION OF SOME BLACK HEBREWS WHOM THEY DESCRIBE AS WANTED AMERICAN CRIMINALS.

EVEN MORE ALARMING TO CARTER, AFTER HE SUCCESSFULLY CONVINCED GLASS THAT THE ANSWER IS A SETTLEMENT AND PERMANENT RESIDENCE VISAS, ARE THE RUMOURS THAT INTERIOR MINISTER YOSEF BURG DISAGREES WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY HIS FELLOW MRP MEMBER.

IT IS DEFINITELY ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE CULT, SAY THE BLACK HEBREWS' CRITICS, TO PRESENT A NEW IMAGE TO THE ISRAELI PUBLIC. CARTER'S VOCABULARY IS NOW DOTTED WITH WORDS LIKE "CO-EXIST" AND SUCH PHRASES AS "CONTRIBUTING TO THE STATE" AND "DOING WHATEVER IS REQUIRED OF US CITIZENS." THE MAN WHO PREVIOUSLY TOOK HIS CASE TO SUCH INTERNATIONAL FIGURES AS RICHARD NIXON, HENRY KISSINGER, KURT VALDHEIM, LEONID BREZHNEV AND IDI AMIN, NOW DESCRIBES HIS BATTLE WITH THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT AS "A FAMILY PROBLEM, LIKE BETWEEN GUSH EMUNIM AND THE GOVERNMENT, AND NATOREI KARTA AND THE GOVERNMENT."

CARTER INSISTS THAT HIS MODERATE NEW STANCE WAS BORN OF THE PUREST OF MOTIVES. "I'VE BEEN WITH YOU FOR 11 YEARS," HE SAYS. "I'VE LEARNED SOMETHING ABOUT YOU. I'M A LITTLE CLOSER TO YOU. I UNDERSTAND YOU BETTER. AND I'M NOT AS EXTREME. I DON'T WANT THIS ROOF TO FALL DOWN."

AFTER YEARS OF BEING IGNORED BY THE GOVERNMENT, HE RECEIVED "WITH UNRESTRAINED JOY" THE GLASS REPORT WHICH DEVOTES 147 PAGES TO DESCRIBING THE CULT AND ASSESSING WHAT THE COUNTRY SHOULD DO WITH ITS FOLLOWERS, CARTER COMMELOUS THE KNESSET MEMBER FREQUENTLY FOR HIS IN-DEPTH RESEARCH, IMPRESSED THAT HE REACHED HIS CONCLUSIONS AFTER NUMEROUS INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED NOT ONLY IN ISRAEL BUT IN THE U.S. CARTER, IN FACT, IS GLASS' FOREMOST CHAMPION THESE

"THE ONLY THING THAT WE HAD SOME RESERVATIONS ABOUT WAS THE LOCATION OF THE VILLAGE WHICH GLASS RECOMMENDED," SAID

CARTER. "WE DIDN'T FEEL THAT RAMAT HOVAV IS A VERY GOOD AREA BECAUSE OF THE GREAT CHEMICAL COMPLEX BEING BUILT THERE AND THE INTENTIONS TO USE THAT AREA TO STORE WASTE CHEMICALS FROM ALL OVER ISRAEL. WE'RE FAMILIAR NATURALLY WITH LOVE CANAL, NIAGARA FALLS, WHERE THEY BURIED ALL THOSE CHEMICALS AND THEY KEPT PENETRATING UNTIL THEY ENTERED INTO THE HOMES AND BODIES OF THE PEOPLE. WE HAD ECOLOGISTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV, CHECK THE SITE OUT AND THEY SAID, 'DON'T TOUCH IT.'"

"WE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED AN AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT, BUT THERE AGAIN WE UNDERSTOOD ONE OF THE PROBLEMS THAT WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR SUCH A LARGE COMMUNITY. AND IT WASN'T OUR INTENTION TO CAUSE ANY UNDESIRABLE EMBROIDER UPON ISRAEL OR THE CITIZENS. SO WHAT HAPPENED IS THAT THEY DECIDED TO ESTABLISH MORE OF A VILLAGE, BUT TO GIVE US A LITTLE PIECE OF LAND TO ALLOW US TO EXPRESS OURSELVES IN ORGANIC FARMING AND THIS WE CAN UNDERSTAND AND EVEN THIS WE ACCEPTED."

PROUDLY CARTER ADDS THAT IN HIS REPORT, GLASS "COMPLETELY EXONERATED" THE CULT OF CHARGES, FIRST REPORTED BY "THE JERUSALEM POST" IN JANUARY 1978, OF MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCES, IMPRISONMENT OF THOSE WHO DEFEY GROUP LAWS, BEATINGS, CHILD ABUSE, AND CONFISCATION OF PASSPORTS.

IN ACTUALITY GLASS WRITES THAT AFTER INTERVIEWING ONE BLACK HEBREW WOMAN IMPRISONED IN NEVE TIRZA, AND TWO OF THE BLACK HEBREWS' JEWISH NEIGHBOURS, "THE COMMITTEE IS UNABLE TO DECIDE IF THERE IS ANY TRUTH IN THE ACCUSATIONS." TO THIS HE ADDS, AS A FOOTNOTE, THAT AN EX-CULT MEMBER IN NEW YORK SPOKE OF A "REGIME OF FEAR AND TERROR" AND DESCRIBED THE BLACK HEBREWS' LONG-TERM GOAL AS "CARRYING OUT MANY EVIL

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DEEDS LIKELY TO CAUSE INJURY TO ISRAEL, ITS CHARACTER AND
INDEPENDENCE."

NONETHELESS, CARTER INSISTED THAT "ALL OF THESE THINGS WERE
THOROUGHLY INVESTIGATED AND WERE FOUND NOT TO BE TRUE,
ENTIRELY WITHOUT BASIS." HE THEN GENEROUSLY WENT ON TO SAY
THAT IF THERE IS INDEED A POLICE REPORT WHICH LISTS
INDIVIDUALS WITH CRIMINAL BACKGROUND LIVING IN THE
COMMUNITY, HE IS ALL FOR "GIVING THEM A CHANCE TO LEAVE."

"I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THAT BECAUSE SOMEONE HAS STOLEN SOME
URANIUM FROM SOME FRENCH SHIPS IS NOT A REASON FOR EVERY-
ONE TO DECLARE THAT THE JEWISH RACE IS A RACE OF WAR
MONGRERS," HE STATED. "IF THERE ARE INDIVIDUALS OF CRIMINAL
BACKGROUND THEY SHOULD STATE THIS AND REFER TO THEM AS
CRIMINALS AND NOT TO THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY. THEY ARE JUDGING
US. I SEE THEM USING THE SAME TACTICS AGAINST US THAT THEY
WERE USING AGAINST JEWS IN GERMANY PRECEDING AND AFTER THE
SECOND WORLD WAR. FIRST OF ALL CHARACTER ASSASSINATION,
MAKING IT LOOK LIKE WE ARE A THREAT TO THIS AND A THREAT
TO THAT. I HEAR THE SAME THINGS THAT THEY USED AGAINST YOU
WHEN THEY BEGAN TO ACTUALLY GO INTO THE HOLOCAUST. I SAW
THEM PRESENT THE LIST OF THE CRIMINALS. WE CAN SIT DOWN AND
I BELIEVE WORK OUT SOMETHING."

WHAT CARTER DOES NOT SAY, OF COURSE, IS THAT ALL OF THE
CULT MEMBERS HAVE TAKEN NEW NAMES AND DESTROYED AS MANY
LINKS TO THEIR PAST LIVES AS POSSIBLE. IDENTIFYING A
PARTICULAR CULT MEMBER, UNLESS HE OR SHE HAS BEEN ARRESTED
FOR COMMITTING A CRIME LOCALLY, IS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE.

AS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE CULT'S WILLINGNESS TO MEET THE
GOVERNMENT "HALF WAY" IF IT RESULTS IN A SETTLEMENT AND
PERMANENT RESIDENCE IS CARTER'S FIRM PLEDGE TO STOP BRING-
ING IN NEW RECRUITS. ALTHOUGH "IT IS FORBIDDEN TO NUMBER
OURSELVES," CARTER CURRENTLY ADMITS TO HAVING AS MANY AS
1,400 FOLLOWERS LIVING IN ISRAEL - THE SAME POPULATION
COUNT HE GAVE ONE AND A HALF YEARS AGO. JEWS IN ARAD AND
DIMONA, WHO INSIST NEW MEMBERS REGULARLY ARRIVE, ESTIMATE
THE BLACK HEBREW POPULATION AS APPROXIMATELY 2,000.

"I WHOLEHEARTEDLY AGREE THAT ON THE BEGINNING OF A GOVERN-
MENT APPLYING THE (GLASS) RECOMMENDATIONS, SHOWING THE
COMMUNITY SOME GOOD WILL, WE WOULD NOT ALLOW ANYONE ELSE
TO JOIN US. NOT AN INFANT, NOT A TOT, NOT A BROTHER OR
SISTER. THAT POINT WOULD BE THE CUT-OFF," CARTER SAID.

"I NEVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT BRINGING TENS OF THOUSANDS OF
BLACK HEBREWS TO ISRAEL, NOT ONCE IN ANY INTERVIEW HAVE I
EVER STATED THAT. POSSIBLY MY SPOKESMAN DID. BUT I NEVER
HAD ANY INTENTION OF BRINGING THEM. FIRST OF ALL THERE
AREN'T ANY TENS OF THOUSANDS OF BLACK AMERICAN ISRAELITES
THAT DESIRE TO COME, SECONDLY WE HAVE NO WAYS OR MEANS OF
BRINGING THEM HERE. THAT WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE TO BE AN ACT
OF GOD ALMIGHTY."

INSTEAD, THE MESSIAH PLANS TO SEARCH LOCALLY FOR NEW SOULS
TO SAVE. ON THAT SENSITIVE SUBJECT, SO NEAR AND DEAR TO THE

HEARTS OF THE NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY OF WHICH BOTH GLASS
AND BURG ARE MEMBERS, CARTER OFFERS NO OLIVE BRANCHES.

"WE WON'T CONVERT. IF THEY ARE ALREADY ISRAELITES, THERE
IS NO MATTER OF CONVERSION, JUST A MATTER OF TURNING
FROM A PATH THAT LEADS UNTO DEATH TO A PATH THAT TURNS
INTO LIGHT. I DON'T THINK THAT BURG OR GLASS, BEING MEN
OF RELIGION, WOULD ASK US NOT TO GO OUT AND TRY TO CONVINCE
ISRAELIS THAT OUR PATH IS THE CORRECT ONE. I FEEL THAT WHAT
WE ARE SAYING NEEDS TO BE HEARD THOROUGHLY AND INVESTIGA-
TED. WHEN THERE IS A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN US AND
THE ISRAELI PEOPLE, THERE WILL BE A DESIRE ON BEHALF OF
THEM TO ALLOW WHAT WE ARE SAYING TO BE PUT TO THE TEST AND
GIVEN A CHANCE," HE SAID.

"THERE MAY BE ALREADY A DOZEN JEWISH PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER
ISRAEL WHO ARE SYMPATHETIC TO US. THEY ARE NOT LIVING HERE
IN DIMONA, BUT WE WOULD CONSIDER THEM PART OF THE
COMMUNITY."

DURING THE ALMOST TWO YEARS IT TOOK GLASS TO PREPARE HIS
REPORT, CARTER AND THE CULT WERE UNCHARACTERISTICALLY
QUIET AND RESTRAINED. THEY ADHERED STRICTLY TO THE AGREE-
MENT MADE WITH MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY
TO "REFRAIN FROM CRITICAL COMMENT IN THE MEDIA," THOUGH
THEIR ATTACK ON ISRAEL CONTINUES IN OTHER FORMS. SINCE THE
REPORT WAS PRESENTED THEY HAVE ACTED LIKE MODEL CITIZENS
AND MADE NUMEROUS PRO-ISRAELI STATEMENTS. WHAT WILL HAPPEN
IF BURG REJECTS GLASS' RECOMMENDATIONS?

CARTER IS CONFIDENT THAT A SOLUTION IS IN THE OFFING.

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"THE PRESSURES NOW ARE SO INTENSE THAT THE NEIGHBOURS ARE BECOMING MUCH MORE VIOLENT IN THEIR THINKING AGAINST THE INTERIOR MINISTRY, AND WHETHER THEY WANT TO OR NOT, IT WILL SPILL OVER INTO A CONFRONTATION WITH THE COMMUNITY. LIKE WHAT HAS HAPPENED RECENTLY WITH THE APARTMENTS. NOW THEY ARE TELLING EVERYONE TO RENT US NO APARTMENTS. WHAT WILL UNCLASSIFIED WE DO? BE OUT IN THE FIELDS SOMEWHERE? WE HAVE NO PLACE TO GO, NO PLACE TO LIVE."

THE GROUP STILL HAS FRIENDS IN AFRICA - A GUEST BOOK INCLUDES SIGNATURES OF SUPPORTERS WHO RECENTLY VISITED DIMONA FROM LIBERIA, GHANA AND ETHIOPIA. AND THE GROUP'S FATE STILL CONCERNS THE AMERICAN BLACK COMMUNITY SO MUCH THAT LAST MONTH LEADERS MET WITH ISRAEL'S AMBASSADOR TO THE U. S. IN NEW YORK.

"TO DEPORT US AFTER 11 YEARS OF BEING HERE AND 13 YEARS AWAY FROM THE STATES WOULD BE MORE THAN A NOTION," WARNED CARTER. "BLACK AMERICA WOULD NOT STAND FOR IT, AND THERE WOULD BE INTENSE INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE ON THE STATE OF ISRAEL."

"I NEVER SUGGESTED THAT THERE WOULD BE ANY MASS SUICIDE HERE, BUT I WOULD SAY THAT IN REALITY IT WOULD BE A TRAGEDY FOR EVERYONE INVOLVED IF THEY WOULD SEND THE ARMY DOWN ON US. WE HAVE NO INTENTIONS OF COMMITTING ANY MASS SUICIDE, BUT WE'VE BEEN OUT OF THE STATES FOR 13 YEARS. OUR CHILDREN FROM 13 YEARS AND UNDER KNOW NOTHING ABOUT SLAVERY, NEGROES, AND WE CERTAINLY HAVE NO INTENTION OF THEIR BEING CAST BACK INTO THE PITS OF HELL. THEY'VE BEEN BORN IN ISRAEL, RAISED IN ISRAEL. THIS IS ALL THAT THEY KNOW AND NO ONE IS EVER GOING TO MAKE THEM SLAVES."

(THIS IS THE SECOND OF A CONTINUING SERIES OF ARTICLES. THE FIRST APPEARED ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10.)

END QUOTE. LEWIS

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